

Watertown Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

To: RDA Board

From: Mason Becker, RDA Executive Director

Date: May 21, 2025

Subject: Future planning discussions

Background

At our last meeting, it was requested that consideration be given to future discussion of the RDA's strategy and plans. The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss what that could look like.

Some suggested ideas may include a SWOT analysis, visioning exercise, a priorities session, or a project impact ranking.

Examples:

Mini SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

- **Goal:** Kickstart strategic thinking by identifying internal and external factors affecting RDA projects.
- **Format:** Use a quadrant chart or whiteboard. Break into small groups or go around the table quickly.
- **Outcome:** Initial SWOT chart that can be expanded in future sessions or used to prioritize issues for 2025-2026.

Visioning Exercise: "Watertown in 2030"

- **Goal:** Align the group on a shared long-term vision for downtown and other redevelopment areas.
- **Prompt:** "What does success look like for the Rock River District and downtown Watertown in 2030?"
- **Outcome:** Collect vision statements, then identify recurring themes or keywords.

Strategic Priorities Brainstorm

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- **Goal:** Identify 3–5 short-term and long-term priorities based on current goals (e.g., riverwalk, housing, downtown activation).
 - **Format:** Use sticky notes or a shared screen for live input; cluster by theme.
 - **Outcome:** Draft list of top priorities to revisit and refine at a future meeting.

Project Impact Ranking

- **Goal:** Begin prioritizing projects based on community impact, feasibility, and alignment with goals.
- **Format:** Use a simple matrix (high/low impact vs. high/low feasibility) to categorize 6–8 current or potential projects.
- **Outcome:** Consensus on high-priority projects to focus on in the coming year.

We would likely bring in an outside facilitator to help lead a session like this, if the board approves of the idea.

Financial Impact

None expected, though some facilitators may request a fee. If so, this would likely be fairly nominal. This will involve discussion only at this time.

Recommendation

Approve a concept to bring forward as an agenda item at a future RDA meeting.